

# Development Week 2017: Career Stories

*Engaging people with diverse perspectives to shape our future –How I got here*



## Robert Hickey Upstream Bioprocess Associate / MES Integration Team

### Career History:

- Joined BMS in August 2016
- Previously worked as a Bartender and a Postman

### What first stirred your interest in a career in the Pharmaceutical Industry?

In the final year of my Genetics & Cell Biology course in DCU some of the modules start to focus more on the Biopharm industry and the production of therapeutic proteins, I found the whole CHO cell manipulation aspect really interesting. I also thought it would be exciting to work for a large corporate company so I started to look into potential employers

### What education and/or other jobs led you to the role you now have?

My education into Biopharma I guess started when I decided at 29 years old that I wanted to go back to school and complete the leaving cert, something I didn't do first time round as I dropped out of school after my junior cert at 16 to do an apprenticeship as a Barman.

After doing the leaving cert I then considered university, I had a good think about what I would actually enjoy studying for 4 years and where I could see myself working in the future. I enrolled into the Foundation Science Course at Killester College of Further Education with the intention of using this course as a spring board of getting me into a degree in Sports Science or Human Nutrition & Dietetics. By the time I finished my year at Killester my university preferences had changed somewhat, I really enjoyed the Biology aspect of the course at Killester that my first and second CAO choices were now Genetics and Biotechnology respectfully.

In the November of my 4<sup>th</sup> year in DCU we got an email informing us that Bristol Myers Squibb were coming to the University to give a talk on a new project happening in Dublin 15. I remember 4 or 5 staff members (including Deirdre McCann who is now my manager) telling us about the new facility being built over in Cruiserath and the 4 year employment plan. I followed this up by attending the Career Zoo Fair in the Conventional Centre the following March and had a good chat with Keith Kelly about the day and life of a Bioprocess Associate and the possibility of me coming to work with BMS. By June I had confirmation that I would be starting with the company in the coming months.



## What were the biggest surprises or challenges you encountered on your career path and how did you deal with them?

Trying to juggle full-time employment and full-time academia was quite challenging. I used to work through the night for An Post 11pm – 6am then go home for a 2 hour nap and then get up and go over to DCU for a full day in college. It was rather strange, you're up working the entire night while the whole country is asleep but then you sitting in a classroom with a room full of students who had been asleep all night. I done this for 2 years until the work load in college got too much that I had to leave my position with An Post and just work part-time as a Barman to focus on my studies.

The biggest surprise for me was the diverse work force I met when I began at BMS. You have it in your head that everybody is going to be the stereotypical nerdy Scientist type working in a Pharmaceutical company but it's quite the opposite. So many different types of people from all parts of Ireland and beyond working here (I was much relieved 😊).

## What skills/behaviours from your previous career do you feel you have leveraged at BMS?

Working as a barman for many years you obtain people skills, you naturally develop an excellent judgement of character. Over the years I have worked in some very busy bars and clubs in Dublin, London and Ibiza. Working in such high paced environments you learn to cope with working under pressure. Also, as a full-time barman from the age of 16 I immediately went straight into working long hours. I'd start work at 10am and work until 1am with a 4hr break in between, 5 days a week. I also once worked a 19hr shift one New Year's Eve with only a 30min break (they let us start drinking at midnight so the last 5 hours were pretty fun 😊). Working these kind of hours from a young age has given me a great work ethic that will surely stand to me when I eventually go on 24/7 shift.

I took a year out from work in 2005 and moved to London to study Music Production where I learnt to use complicated music production software programs such as Pro Tools, Ableton Live and Logic that I still use to this day. Looking at the software interfaces we are using here in BMS such as Syncade and Delta V, isn't as daunting as it should be because of this.

## What does Career Development mean for you?

Career Development for me means Personal Development. They coincide with one another. You progress in your abilities so you progress as a person. I was far more confident leaving DCU then I was when I first entered the college.

## What is your favourite motivational quote?

A Person Cannot Build A Reputation On Saying What They Are Going To Do, Go Out There And Do It.



*Shift Your Mindset...Discover Your Potential*