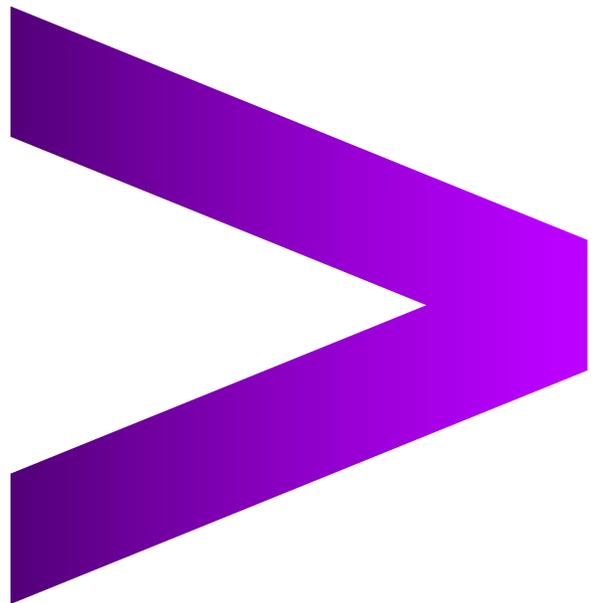


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JENNIFER DUFF: Thank you, Amy, for joining us today. So we'll get started with our interview.

AMY GILLESPIE: Okay, great.

JENNIFER: So you studied Quantitative Business Analysis in school, moving onto to achieve an MS in Applied Sciences. So tell us about what inspired you to that field?

AMY: So very interestingly, I did not start out in Quantitative Business Analysis at Penn State. I actually started in a degree called Actuarial Science and the reason I started on that path is because I was always really good at math in high school. And when I was looking to decide on majors for college, my calculus teacher informed me about this position as an actuary. And I thought it was very interesting utilizing my math skills and you can make a lot of money and that was, you know, an 18-year-old teenager, that was something that I was interested in at the time. So that was my major for the first three years of college. And I had an internship at Prudential following my junior year and I realized that it just wasn't the right fit for me and I didn't see myself being an actuary for the rest of my career.

So I actually went back right before my senior year of college and spoke with my advisor and changed my major. And the goal was to still graduate on time and the degree that I was able to do that with was Quantitative Business Analysis.

AMY: I can probably credit my calculus teacher from high school really setting me on this path to pursue an education down the math and sciences field. And I'm very lucky to have had that guidance at that young age. And also, my parents, telling me to follow my interests and utilize my strengths.

JENNIFER: That's funny. My high school biology teacher is one of the big reasons I went into the sciences myself.

AMY: I'd be hesitant to use the word barriers because I'm very happy to the level that I've been able to attain, very proud of the role that I've been able to achieve. And, in fact, the first associate vice president of this role at Merck and actually, the first woman leader of the group.

But I have challenges, of course. You know, we all have challenges in our jobs, in our careers. So some of the challenges, number one, was trying to figure out how to work full time and be a mother. You know, we all struggle with that and that was obviously a struggle for me as well and trying to figure out how to make both work and to be successful in both aspects of your life. That was certainly a challenge.

The second challenge would be to have the confidence in myself and be willing to ensure that I get noticed by colleagues and peers and leaders, especially in group conversations. Actually, I was told by a very smart trainer that I had that he said, make sure you speak in the first 15 minutes of a meeting because typically, that first word is the hardest to get out,

but once you start speaking and you get recognized, it becomes easier from then on. And that was such wise advice and I remember when I was younger in my career, I would start looking at my watch, is it 15 minutes yet, have I spoken? But it was great advice. But I would receive feedback like you never say no or you're too smiley or your too nice or why does your performance review never say anything negative?

And those kinds of feedback were perplexing to me because I thought it was a good thing to be a nice individual and hardworking. But that did impact me and I realized that you can't be a push over, but it's also okay to be nice and collaborative and to be a partner with your customers and your stakeholders. That goes a long way. So I utilized that feedback to capitalize it and be who I am today as a leader. I think it's very important to be nice and understanding and the ability to work with others, I think, is very critical.

JENNIFER: So what if your perspective on networking? Being in a technical scientific field, it can be different. So what is your perspective on that?

AMY: Yeah, certainly networking and working with others and learning from other people is incredibly important. And whether that's talking with people at conferences and industry events, working with people outside of your departments, learning from people that have other jobs outside of their present job and just having a conversation with them to learn what's going on in another company or another organization. Those conversations lead to so much knowledge that I think it's very important to do, whether you call it networking or communicating with others, learning from others, definitely something that I would highly recommend, especially to those wallflowers or individuals that aren't particularly confident in those kind of social engagements, you know, I strongly encourage everyone to try to network and communicate and learn from others as much as possible.

AMY: So work hard, set a plan and some goals and objectives and be determined, resilient, of course, and leverage those opportunities to take science-based courses, math courses, technology courses are obviously very valuable to gain that quantitative understanding, I think, is very important. But then just more generally, I think it's very important for people to be open to change and be willing to maybe go down a path that they didn't envision for themselves originally when they started their career. I think that was a big learning for me and being open to change and new opportunities, I feel, has been a critical factor to help me be the leader who I am today.