

INTREPID PATHWAYS—JODY CELLAR

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Formal qualifications

I have a Bachelor of Science Degree in Chemical Engineering and Petroleum Refining from Colorado School of Mines, USA. During my studies I also completed many classes in Environmental Engineering as well as Spanish Language and Latin American Culture.

Current professional role & responsibilities

My current role is Superintendent feasibility studies. I project manage and support development of expansion projects from Order of Magnitude stage through to Feasibility Study stage. I also provide technical support to the process teams at our three salt mines in Western Australia.

Feasibility studies involve design; resource estimation; risk mitigation; estimation and evaluation of project economics; and address of all health, safety, environmental and community (HSEC) investigations, consultation and approvals. I complete some of the work myself and coordinate internal and external resources to assist in the completion of the work. I review all work that is done to make sure that it is sufficiently meeting the project needs and objectives. At the end of Feasibility Study stage, a Feasibility Study Report is submitted to my company's investment committee.

Current employer - type

Mining company

Overview of career in the industry

I began my current role with a mining company just over a year ago. Before that I worked for a consultant as a process engineer in the water and wastewater treatment sector. My work as a water consultant took me to several mine sites to help them work out best solutions to manage water use and to treat acid mine and acid rock drainage. I transferred to the mining industry because I liked the fast pace and friendly environment, as well as working on the challenges of minimising impact on the environment.

EXPERIENCES WORKING IN THE RESOURCES SECTOR

Was working in the resources industry what you expected it would be when you were studying/training?

I wanted to be able to travel to places around the world in my work and the industry has been great for that.

What is the single most risky step you have ever taken your career? Did you find it paid off? Is there anything you would have done differently?

I moved to Australia with my husband 20 months ago and really wanted to get a job in the mining industry. It took a while to find a role that I could adapt my past experience in water and wastewater treatment to. While I was looking for the perfect role in the mining industry, I turned down several job offers for roles similar to what I had done in the past. It was very stressful to actually turn down work and I worried what would happen if I never found a job in the mining industry after turning away other companies that I could have worked for. In the end I found a great job and the hold-out paid off.

What would you say have been the most significant 'step changes' in your career pathway, and how have you adapted to these?

I wanted a career that I could travel with. So far I have worked in four countries. Not only have I gotten to see the world like I wanted to, but the experience of working in different cultures has greatly built on my skills and versatility at work.

If you undertook any additional formal study whilst in the industry, did you find it useful in progressing your career?

I myself have not undertaken any additional formal studies since university. I am happy with the expertise I have and what it allows me to do for the company. I have seen additional studies to work best for people that want to expand or change their roles.

What would you most like to get out of your career in resources in the future?

Having been in the industry only 18 months, my main goal at the present moment is to continue to learn and build on my experiences.

WORKING LIFESTYLE

What are your current work/accommodation arrangements?

Capital city based (with limited travel)

Do you have a preference for any particular working arrangement? What have your experiences with different types of arrangements been like?

I like my current arrangement, living in Perth and travelling to our mine sites once a month or so. There was a time that I was seconded to work on a site for six months. It was a great opportunity to spend some time in a small community and to explore the sites in the area.

What changes or compromises have you had to make in order to balance family or other responsibilities or interests with a career in the industry? Have you found the right balance for you?

I have not had any issues. One thing I make sure to do is eat healthy and get regular exercise. This keeps me energised and able to handle the challenges of balancing work and life.

Has your employer been open to negotiating changes to your role or roster to accommodate non-work interests or responsibilities?

Yes. I really enjoy taking long holidays to explore the world, relax and recharge on a tropical island, or spend time with friends and family. So far in my career I have been able to take up to two months off per year by coordinating work with colleagues and taking leave without pay.

BEING FEMALE IN THE INDUSTRY

What challenges have you experienced by virtue of working in an industry that is predominantly male? Do you feel you have had to adapt to 'fit' the industry?

It has been very interesting to see and learn how to work with the different approaches that men and women take to getting something done. More and more, companies are learning the value of the diversities in their staff. Working in a predominately male environment makes me greatly appreciate the opportunities that I get to work with other women. It is great to see more and more women coming into the industry.