

Career Perspective

What Do I Want To Be When I Grow Up?

By Elina N. Khachiyani, Esq., RAC



Elina N. Khachiyani, Esq., RAC, is a Massachusetts based practicing attorney, focused on pharmaceutical, chemical, and nutritional regulatory matters. Elina has been working in regulatory for five years and in various roles within the pharmaceutical industry for over 10 years. Khachiyani holds a Juris Doctorate, a Bachelor's in Chemistry and Secondary Education, as well as various industry certifications, including three RAC Credentials. She is the founder of Elina Khachiyani Consulting, LLC, a law practice focused on assisting businesses in navigating the complexities of regulatory compliance.

There I was, over 15 years ago now, at the Suffolk University Registrar's Office, trying to decide on my major. Like all other college freshman, I was about to make a decision that would send me on a particular career path, a decision which would certainly affect the rest of my life in one way or another.

I narrowed my choices down to a science discipline and finally settled on the Chemistry and Secondary Education program.

Truthfully, I had no idea what I wanted to do after college, but there were three major reasons behind this decision. I knew a science degree would always be in demand, and there would likely always be a job available for me. I also knew that if I picked one of the

more challenging programs, which science programs tend to be known for, then I would be able to train and discipline myself to take on most other programs should I decide to in the future. And finally, I just simply loved the idea of learning about chemicals and performing experiments in the lab!

After college I went on to work in hospital and pharmaceutical settings, in all of which my chemistry education came in handy. Then I decided to change things up a bit and went on to law school. After law school, I worked in the pharmaceutical and chemical industries primarily in the area of Regulatory Affairs, and then went on to open a law practice focused on assisting FDA regulated companies and chemical companies with regulatory compliance matters. I made this decision to go out on my own and focus on this particular area of law because I recognized the fact that what I had to offer – a chemistry background coupled with law – was a unique combination which would certainly help me stand out in today's competitive job market.

I always say how fortunate I feel to be able to utilize both my chemistry background and my law background in every aspect of my career. I find that my colleagues and others in the legal industry are pleasantly surprised whenever they hear that my undergraduate degree is far different from law, and are even more interested to hear about what led me to make that shift.

So, to all of you science majors out there, or those of you thinking about entering a program with a science focus, please know that the sky is the limit for your career path. If you are drawn to science but are not sure how it will fit into your future career, do not fear, because as you can see from my story, you can turn your science education into anything you want!