

EMERGING LEADER

Andre Santa, Eastern Alloys

BY ALISON BUTLER

TRUE LEADERS TAKE INITIATIVE

Considering a career in manufacturing? Andre says Go For It!



Andre is demonstrating how production samples are taken during the casting process.

Some people know from an early age that they want to work in manufacturing, some people find that calling when they are in college or searching for a job in the workforce, but for Andre Santa, manufacturing found him and literally grabbed him by the arm.

The Council of Industry has been creating a new workforce initiative to encourage young people to look at manufacturing in a new light and to illuminate the great career paths and opportunities available in industry. As part of this initiative we are highlighting people we consider emerging leaders in their field. This profile of Andre Santa, the Chemist and Quality Assurance Process Engineer Manager at Eastern Alloys in Maybrook, NY is our first in a series of articles looking at how and why young people start a career path in manufacturing.

As a kid, Andre grew up right around the corner from the Eastern Alloys Maybrook plant, never even knowing that it existed. He loved sports and dreamed of being a forward for the New York Knicks one day. By high school he realized that he may need a back-up plan and focused on chemistry with the intent of becoming a chemistry teacher. “I was really good in Science and I loved it. I took AP Bio in high school, AP Chem wasn’t offered. After high school, I went to Hartford University on an academic scholarship.”

Andre realized after his first year of college what many talented students discover, doing well in high school doesn’t always translate in to doing well in college. “I didn’t realize how much college differed from high school, I actually had to try hard to get a decent grade. I ended up leaving Hartford after less than a year and went to Orange County Community College.”

Andre completed his Associates Degree in natural sciences from OCCC in 2005 and spent the next five years working at The Home Depot. In 2008 he became a father to his beautiful daughter, Leeya and the money from his Home Depot job wasn't enough so he went back to school at Mount St. Mary College in Newburgh in pursuit of his teaching degree. "This time would be different because I had a whole new perspective on life and dedicated almost all my time to making sure I graduated with high marks. In 2012 I graduated Cum Laude, with my BA in chemistry while concurrently working on my MS in education. At this point I was sure that I was going to still become a teacher and was actually set to student teach in the fall."

Two weeks before graduation, on a whim Andre went to a job fair hosted by The Mount and quickly printed out a few resumes which he gave to some companies that caught his eye not really expecting anything. Within

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minutes of reviewing his resume at the job fair, Karen Wutch, HR supervisor at Eastern Alloys found him walking around the fair still distributing resumes and grabbed him by the arm. She asked if he would come and speak with Richard Bauer, Eastern Alloys CEO. "After speaking with Mr. Bauer and Rick Young, VP of Sales, the rest is history."

To elaborate on that history, in May of 2012 Andre began working at Eastern Alloys, manufacturer of world-class zinc alloys for the die casting, foundry and steel coating industries, using state-of-the-art processing technologies. Their zinc products are marketed under the EAZALL® trade name and manufactured in their modern 100,000-square-foot plant in Maybrook, New York, and another plant in Henderson, Kentucky.

As the Chemist and Quality Assurance Process Engineer Manager, in the Maybrook plant, his responsibilities include maintenance of Eastern Alloys quality management system (ISO 9001 and ISO 17025), analyzing the chemistry of internal production samples, as well as samples provided by customers, through SPARK-OES and ICP-OES. He also takes on other projects as they arise. In addition, Andre manages the safety program and ensures that all personnel are getting the appropriate training and oversees some of the environmental programs, such as the State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and above and underground storage tanks.



Andre shows the Eastern Alloys warehouse with some of the inventory.

When talking with Andre his passion for his work shines through. His face lights up discussing the chemistry he uses day to day and the processes he completes. In addition to the work itself, Andre enjoys the people he works with and the environment at Eastern Alloys, “The

people here are great and the management team is top notch.” Another perk of the job that he enjoys, “I love the fact I get to travel for work. I’ve gone to training in Florida and North Carolina; I went to visit one of our galvanizing customers in West Virginia and was able to learn so much about what our products are used for.”

The only downside to the job that Andre could come up with is, getting up early because he enjoys watching sports in his off time. “I’m a die-hard sports fan and all the big games are usually late at night, and I just can’t stay up late enough to watch the whole game. But, I don’t have any real complaints; Eastern Alloys is a great company to work for. They truly care about every employee as if we were family.”

After taking such a roundabout path to get to his current position, Andre plans to stay with Eastern Alloys for the remainder of his career and he hopes to do more traveling, whether for work or pleasure he hopes to go to Europe and Asia someday.

As part of his free time outside of work, Andre tutors high school and college students and this is something he plans to continue with. He hopes he can pass on his love for chemistry and math and perhaps becoming a mentor eventually, like the professors he still keeps in touch with from Mount Saint Mary College. “Dr. Lynn Maelia, Dr. Janet Petroski, and Dr. William Lahar. They went above and beyond to help me succeed. I sometimes still contact them with questions or to bounce something off them.” John Malmgreen, Eastern Alloys VP of Manufacturing and Quality has also been a mentor. “He has taught me a lot about the industry and being a degreed chemist himself, has helped me in the lab to learn/enhance my skills in analytical techniques.”

For those young people considering a career in manufacturing, Andre has this advice, “Go for it. There is so much to learn and if you work hard there are always opportunities for advancement. Also, expect to wear more than one hat. True leaders take initiative to help solve problems and want to be involved in tasks they may not be comfortable in. It’s all in the learning process.”



Inspecting a Margash Ingot for imperfections.



Editors Note: All photos are posed and appropriate personal protection equipment is not being worn.

Alison Butler is the Director of Member Programs & Services at the Council of Industry.

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-Rich Croce of Viking Industry

“ You and your company can’t afford not to participate ”
-Ellen Anderson of Selux

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