



Misty Hughes

Consumer Centricity Module Leader II

Education

B.S. in Foods, Nutrition & Dietetics with a minor in Business Administration
Carson-Newman University

Lagniappe:

A Little Something Extra

The most unique aspect of my career is that a Consumer Scientist has culinary, food science and FCS skills in order to meet job requirements. I have often been asked, "Are you a chef? Is it like a food scientist?" and my answer to that is no, but food prep knowledge and understanding how foods interact with heat in the oven or a cooktop is essential. Working as a Consumer Scientist for a kitchen appliance company requires this combined knowledge because we are developing oven performance based on multiple types of food tests in different oven modes, while keeping consumer expectations at the top of our priorities. My history in FCS is also applied when speaking to customers, who need more in depth information on how to use our ovens and ranges.



Consumer Centricity Module Leader II

My name is Misty Hughes and my job title is Consumer Centricity Module Leader II. I work for B/S/H/ Home Appliances in Jacksboro, Tennessee. I am a graduate of the Family & Consumer Sciences program at Carson-Newman University.

My Career Path

In 2009 I did my undergraduate externship at B/S/H/ during one semester. In that time I worked alongside the Consumer Scientist on site and learned how to do performance tests on professional style kitchen ranges. My interest had always skewed more toward the food science side of dietetics, so when this opportunity presented itself I knew this was the externship for me. In September 2011 the Consumer Scientist I worked with in 2009 decided to retire and she recommended me as her replacement. I interviewed for the position in August 2011 and started at B/S/H/ in September 2011.

Inspiration for Career Choice

After my externship I had a new interest in cooking and appliances in general. I never considered the work that goes into producing ovens, ranges, and cooktops for consumer's homes. Knowing that my work with performance development can be shown anytime a Thermador or Bosch cooking appliance is advertised helped drive my passion for this role. I am also motivated to figure out issues that may arise with our appliances. Since my childhood I have been fascinated with mystery series, and enjoy uncovering answers while working through issues.

Skills Vital to Success in Career

Kitchen skills, culinary knowledge, and a research focused mindset are essential for a career as a Consumer Scientist. These are the building blocks of the Consumer Centricity module, and all things I have carried with me throughout my career. Soft skills are also effective in this role. Knowing how to work with different individuals and occasionally speaking directly with consumers, it is important to know how to identify with people and to be on their level.

Best Advice to Someone Considering This Career

The jobs are not always easy to find, but if you are interested in a particular company or brand, reach out to them to see what job opportunities they have available.

Recommended Educational Preparation

In most career fields, job experience goes a long way. Having the proper educational background for a career is a positive aspect in an interview, but actual job experience and internships will help with making you a stand out candidate.

The degree concentrations of myself and my leaders are Nutrition, Food Science, Child & Family Studies, and Fermentation Science.

How the Field Has Changed Over Time

Within the company, the Consumer Centricity group has grown tremendously over the past 11 years. When I started I was 1 of 3 people between TN and NC. Now we are a group of 11 across three sites. We also have colleagues at our international factories that we collaborate with on various projects. These groups have grown as well.

As far as seeking out a consumer scientist position, you may have to do quite a bit of searching and looking at other areas like Research & Development. It is not a common position, but the type of work exists in many different companies.

Projected Changes in the Future

There will always be a need for consumer scientists in many companies. I do not see the profession diminishing, however, the job titles do not always align. If seeking a career in this field, I recommend looking in the broad category of Research & Development.