

Meet GPO's New Secure Credential Assistant Production Manager: Etsegenet Lemma



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Etsegenet Lemma began working at the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) in 2018 as a Quality Contract Specialist in Security and Intelligent Documents (SID). As a contractor, she worked with both the Passport and Melzer Operations and also served as the subject matter expert for the Next Generation Passport. In April 2020, Lemma was selected as GPO's new Secure Credential Assistant Production Manager overseeing Card Production and the Melzer Operations in our DC office.

"Coming on board at this unprecedented time was both exciting and challenging as a new leader at GPO," says Lemma who began her new position shortly after the start of the COVID pandemic. "But I always believe challenging times are sometimes the best time to be creative and innovative. I love learning new things and figuring out new ways to do a better-quality product." Lemma, who has been on site every day since June of last year, not only oversees the startup of the full-time Melzer production,

she is also responsible for the quality of the products over multiple shifts. In addition, she manages our DC Card operations with revenues exceeding \$30 million dollars. In her new role, Lemma brings both education and technical experience from the private sector to GPO.

"I have a pretty good passion for operations and leadership in the technical field," says Lemma who grew up in Ohio and received her Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering from Cleveland State University's Fenn College of Engineering. As a senior, she was recruited on campus to work for both L'Oreal and Sherwin-Williams. At the time, Sherwin-Williams did not have the position she was looking for. She then began working as a process engineer at L'Oreal's manufacturing site. Soon after, a position was created for her at Sherwin-Williams as a polymer synthesis process engineer; where she worked for two years before moving to Maryland. It was during this time that Lemma was trying to decide between medical

school and engineering.

"I had a passion for science and wanted to go to medical school and be a neurosurgeon, but I also wanted to be an engineer in undergrad," says Lemma. "So, I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do." Lemma, whose passion was science, considered going to medical school if she didn't find a job right away in engineering. However, within 5 days of posting her resume on Monster.com, she landed a great job in Havre De Grace, Maryland with Cytec Aerospace Engineering where she worked for eight years as the lead engineer overseeing 50% of its operation. "I started as an entry level process engineer and by the time I left there I was lead engineer," says Lemma. "I grew my operations and knowledge of manufacturing technology and also became a part of the union negotiation team and the new leaders' development team." Lemma then worked at the Rust-Oleum Corporation as a manufacturing lead operations engineer for two and a half years.

Now with 13 years of manufacturing experience, Lemma was open to new opportunities in her field. It was at this time that a head hunter called her about a two-year contracting job in the Federal Government, which led to the position she has today in SID. As a manufacturing leader at GPO, Lemma's goals are to improve operations, reduce waste, and create team-building activities to empower and engage the operation and production teams for better performance. One of Lemma's achievements in the last six months has been tremendous waste reduction in the Melzer production for the Next Generation Passport. "I have a passion for the leadership platform, which means that every position has its own responsibility for leadership," says Lemma who is currently pursuing her Master of Science in Leadership. "I try to have that understanding between the floor and management and that everyone has a job to do. We have a great team here at GPO."



Secure Credential Assistant Production Manager, Etsegenet Lemma, stands on the production floor inspecting a component for quality control.