There are numerous challenges faced by undergraduate and graduate students getting into industry with little or no industrial experience. Similarly, there are challenges faced by companies in ensuring they get the right fit as the opportunity cost of a wrong hire is value destroying. This discussion will be focused on the supply side (students getting into the marketplace) and general expectations from industry today.

How do you put your classroom and laboratory lessons into practice? How could you use 1st principles and statistical analysis (DOE and other tools) to be decisive and efficient? How do you adapt, learn new technologies on the job and become effective fast? I would like to share some personal examples and discuss what has worked for me and where I could have done better, and why the US needs good quality Chemical Engineers more today than ever before.

Vikram Gopal is currently the Global Director for Technology and Product Marketing at INVISTA Engineering Polymers, where he is leading a fast growing start-up business. Prior to this he was Global Product Manager at General Electric where he built the Valox and Xenoy iQ business (1st sustainable Engineering Polymers business). Vikram joined GE Plastics as a Process Engineer, and then built his experience base with assignments as a Product Developer, Manufacturing, Quality, Technical Sales, and Product Management. Vikram has an MS and Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Alabama, and an MBA from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He earned his BE in Petrochemical Engineering from the University of Poona, India.