

Chapter 88

The Drivers for a Sustainable Chemical Manufacturing Industry

George M. Hall

University of Central Lancashire, UK

Joe Howe

University of Central Lancashire, UK

ABSTRACT

This chapter describes the current situation of the chemical manufacturing industry and looks to the future demands on the sector such as: for sustainability, the advent of new bio-based feedstocks for improved energy management and the implications of these demands on the sector. These implications include definitions of sustainability criteria for the chemical manufacturing industry and the need for transparent reporting following the Triple Bottom Line approach. The important role of chemical (or more generally, process) engineers in delivering bio-based sustainable solutions is emphasised, but this also suggests that a new way of thinking about the discipline is required. Indeed, there are arguments that the demand for a sustainable chemical manufacturing sector could bring about the next paradigm shift in the discipline with concomitant education implications.

INTRODUCTION

The Chemical Manufacturing Industry (CMI) can be multinational in operation and varied in scale whilst producing the products which underpin other sectors such as: health provision; clothing; housing and shelter; food and nutrition; entertainment and leisure; transport and tourism—the

very fabric of human life. The variety of activity in the sector can be said to demand that, “Process Engineering,” is a more correct term to encompass industries as widely different as food processing, minerals processing, pharmaceutical manufacture and petroleum refining. However, there is commonality in their activity where heat and mass transfer, transport phenomena, reaction kinetics, modelling and fluid mechanics are all applied in unit operations albeit to widely varying materials

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-1945-6.ch088

and situations. For this reason in this chapter we have used the term CMI to cover this spectrum of activity and the general approaches which we describe can be applied equally well to all in our opinion.

The products of the chemical industry are derived from inorganic, synthetic organic and biological sources which have been manipulated by a range of process operations which include classical physico-chemical processes such as synthesis, distillation, precipitation, filtration, solvent extraction and crystallisation techniques which have been supplemented by fermentation processes, the application of industrial enzymes and the genetic manipulation of microorganisms in modern biotechnology. These technologies have made a vast number of products available to promote social development and economic growth and prosperity. At the same time the chemical industry has been accused of overexploitation of natural resources, air, water and land pollution (such as by oil production in the Niger River delta, opencast mining on fragile Pacific islands and the catastrophic Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico) and creating social problems associated with rapid industrialisation and the invasion of vulnerable societies and environments for commercial gain (witness the toxic release from the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, in 1984). When Industrial Revolutions have taken place starting from Europe, North America and then into Latin America, Asia and Africa the ills of industrialisation were ignored initially, as the price to pay for progress although eventually the development of organised labour and government structures have improved the situation in many cases. Whilst accepting this historical context (Coley & Wilmot, 2000) the future development of the CMI must nowadays be viewed in the light of the concept of sustainability (Garcia-Serna, Perez-Barrigon, & Cocero, 2007) which means tackling the issues of the change from fossil fuel to bio-based raw materials and energy conservation and management (Hall & Howe, 2010).

This chapter will describe the criteria by which the CMI is judged and how sustainability is reported by the industry. It will then describe the new technologies impacting on process engineers in a sustainable CMI and finally go on to discuss whether the sustainable approach will demand a new type of process engineer and the educational implications of this demand.

BACKGROUND

Defining Sustainability

Sustainability, or Sustainable Development (SD), is a discipline that has long been of interest to scientists, technologists, politicians, and business alike. Thomas Malthus in his, *Essay on the Principle of Population*, of 1798, proposed that the power of population increasing in a geometric ratio would outstrip the power of the earth to sustain mankind increasing in an arithmetic ratio and thus a link was made between population and sustainability. However, the advent of the concept of sustainability can be traced back in modern times to the 1970's but the UN Commission on Environment and Development (the so-called Brundtland Report) in the 1980's was a major point in defining the topic (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). The Commission was originally instructed to investigate the issues of global inequality, resource distribution and global population impacts and recommend solutions to these issues. Their oft-quoted report definition of sustainable development is, "Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."

The report linked economic development with social and environmental concerns for the first time and a balance of economics, social justice and environmental protection was proposed if sustainable development was to happen - this became known as the Triple Bottom Line. The

19 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/drivers-sustainable-chemical-manufacturing-industry/69359

Related Content

A Fuzzy Inventory Model for Weibull Deteriorating Items with Price-Dependent Demand and Shortages under Permissible Delay in Payment

Chandra K. Jaggi, Sarla Pareek, Anuj Sharma and Nidhi (2012). *International Journal of Applied Industrial Engineering* (pp. 53-79).

www.irma-international.org/article/a-fuzzy-inventory-model-for-weibull-deteriorating-items-with-price-dependent-demand-and-shortages-under-permissible-delay-in-payment/93015

An Analysis for the Use of Simulation Modeling in Reducing Patient Waiting Time in Emergency Departments (EDs) in Hospitals

Shailesh Narayanrao Khakale, Ramesh D. Askhedkar and Rajesh H. Parikh (2020). *International Journal of Applied Industrial Engineering* (pp. 52-64).

www.irma-international.org/article/an-analysis-for-the-use-of-simulation-modeling-in-reducing-patient-waiting-time-in-emergency-departments-eds-in-hospitals/263795

Mathematical Optimization Models for the Maintenance Policies in Production Systems

Alperen Baland Sule Itir Satoglu (2018). *Handbook of Research on Applied Optimization Methodologies in Manufacturing Systems* (pp. 252-268).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/mathematical-optimization-models-for-the-maintenance-policies-in-production-systems/191781

Fuzzy Logic: Concepts, System Design, and Applications to Industrial Informatics

Siddhartha Bhattacharyya and Paramartha Dutta (2012). *Handbook of Research on Industrial Informatics and Manufacturing Intelligence: Innovations and Solutions* (pp. 33-71).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/fuzzy-logic-concepts-system-design/64716

A Comparative Analysis of Activity-Based Costing and Traditional Costing Systems: The Case of Egyptian Metal Industries Company

Khaled Samaha and Sara Abdallah (2013). *Industrial Engineering: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 1429-1440).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/comparative-analysis-activity-based-costing/69348