

# Managing for the Future of the Industry

**Paul Marriott is a strong believer in investing in younger talent for the paint industry**

**A**s a chemist, transferring to the coatings business in DuPont was like coming home, says Paul Marriott, technical manager for DuPont Performance Coatings (DPC) Canada, Ajax, ON. "Certainly, once you are in the paint industry you learn pretty quickly that 'watching paint dry' can be pretty exciting if you are the person responsible for the technology," he remarks half-jokingly.

The first 12 years of Marriott's career with DuPont were spent at the Research Centre in Kingston, ON, working in the area of polymer processing and flexible packaging, initially as a research scientist. In 1985, he assumed a research management role.

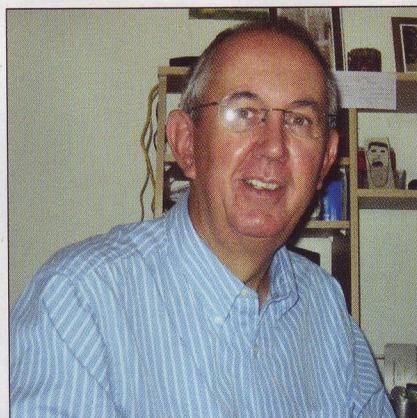
Eight years later, he transferred to DPC as the technical manager at the laboratory in Ajax, ON, and has held the role to this day, in addition to other significant responsibilities. These currently include coordination activities related to the Canadian government's Chemical Management Plan on behalf of DuPont, among other tasks.

Born in Sutton Coldfield, England, Marriott obtained his BA and PhD in chemistry at University of York; he is also a member of the Royal Society of Chemistry. He came to Canada in 1978 for post doctoral studies, then spent two years as a research associate at the National Research Council of Canada in Ottawa. In 1981, he joined DuPont Canada.

Currently, Marriott is responsible for the leadership of the DPC Technical Organization in Canada, particularly the DPC Development Laboratory in Ajax. "The laboratory has a North American mandate to provide technology and product development for the paint for plastics segment of the automotive OEM business," he explains. This mandate includes the development of new technologies for this segment and their associated

approval by automobile manufacturers, product development, new model-year/colour development, together with technical support to Tier I customers using DuPont products, he adds.

"As the Technical Centre for the DPC paint for the exterior plastics segment of the automotive OEM business in North America, we are working to ensure our technologies and products continue to satisfy the needs of our customers, in light of trends facing our industry, which are affecting not only the paint formulations but also the plastic substrates the coatings are applied to and the application techniques," he explains.



**PAUL MARRIOTT**  
Technical Manager,  
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One such trend Marriott mentions is globalization of the automotive industry. "As the automotive OEMs expand into China and Eastern Europe, they are looking for global rather than regional technologies to facilitate their flexibility to operate around the world," he says. Environmental awareness and the impact that coatings products have upon the environment are an increasingly important factor globally for technology and product development, he adds.

Another trend of interest to Marriott is government initiatives, such as

REACH in Europe and the Chemical Management Plan in Canada, "which have implications on the range and nature of chemicals available for use in paint and coatings that need to be dialed into the planning of technical developments," he says.

The final, but no less significant, trend Marriott lists is the price of oil which, he says, affects the cost of virtually all the ingredients the industry uses. "Consequently," he adds, "we need to ensure we are achieving maximum effectiveness from the materials we include in our products."

A member of the Chemical Management Plan Working Group of the Canadian Paint and Coatings Association, Marriott strongly believes that it is important to invest in seasoning younger talent into the coatings industry. "As a technical organization, we (DuPont) have learned that, while the Canadian education system provides a technically proficient workforce, we needed a program to give prospective employees exposure to the coatings industry and the paint-specific skills required for our industry." Consequently, the organization has developed an apprenticeship-style process based in Ajax, which has led to the hiring off over 70 "paint-savvy employees" into DuPont Performance coatings.

Despite his love of the industry, Marriott isn't in a lab all day. An avid soccer fan supporting Liverpool and England, he is a certified soccer referee for the Ontario Soccer Association. He is married to wife Pam, a data analyst with a Markham-based social agency, and has two daughters who are currently enrolled in Masters programs at the University of Saskatchewan and Queen's University, Kingston, respectively. **CM**

*Trisha Richards is a freelance writer in Toronto.*