

Stepan Neuman



This is me, Stepan Neuman, director of the household chemistry plant in Uzhgorod. This photo was taken for the board of honor at the plant in 1952.

After World War II I began to work with Samuel Weiss. In 1945 he became deputy minister of the chemical industry. He gave me the task to complete an inventory of trophy chemical products in Uzhgorod and develop a proposal for their further use. This was my first job. I managed to find heating oil in underground containers that the Germans had stored for locomotives moving to the front. There were dozens of 60-ton containers there.

I was authorized to establish production on the former saw mill that hadn't operated since the early 1940s. We couldn't start production of wheel grease for vehicles for lack of the necessary components. We started production of goods for schools: chalk and ink. Our factory was expanding and we were given another building where I arranged a soap factory. We started from making plain household soap from bone fat that was supplied from the meat factory. When we expanded production, we managed to arrange production of toilet soap. Besides, we started production of an ointment for scab.

I was manager of these two shops at our factory and in 1948 it expanded to set up a household chemistry plant and it was developing fast. I was appointed director of the plant. We were expanding our products and some time later this plant turned into an enterprise of all-Union significance.

I was looking for young, initiative people with a university degree. Only these factors were significant for me, not their nationality. Our employees had training at similar enterprises abroad.

When our category was raised from 3 to 1, our employees began to earn significantly more money. I was trying to help them with all of their everyday problems, helping them to get a dwelling, built a kindergarten for the children and a family recreation camp.