

Three ways to get the most from your career as an engineer

Dear Colleagues, Members and Partners,

While summer is upon us, and things are often running at a slower pace at work, this is an opportune time to take inventory of your skills, experiences and your legacy. Whether you're a student, young professional or senior, taking the time to step back from what you're doing to look at the bigger picture is never a bad idea.

1 – How do you measure up? The easiest way to answer this question is with this one: are you getting too comfortable in your job? The truth is; we should never get too comfortable. Don't get me wrong – I'm not talking about looking for new work opportunities, I'm talking about not taking your current position for granted. If we want to stay on top of our game, we need to stay on top of what we're doing – that is with the latest technologies, methods, regulations and global affairs – just to name a few. If the last time you took a new course or did anything to sharpen your skills is so far back that you can't remember the date, then it's high time to see what the latest opportunities are to get up to speed.

Here are a few things to consider when reviewing your current skills set:

- Who do you take inspiration from? If there someone you look up to at work? Find ways to work together, either through work shadowing, mentorship or getting involved on the same projects.
- What are some of the challenges that you or your company are faced with? What you are doing to contribute or help the situation? Problem solving or any initiative outside of your job description will always get noticed.
- When was the last time you upgraded your skills? If it's been more than 6 months, then look for courses in either industry related topics, soft skills or technology. This can also help you bring new ideas to the table.
- Look for opportunities outside of work to get involved in industry related projects and initiatives. This will pay back tenfold. Networking leads to opportunities, surrounding yourself with experts in the field gives you a platform to share and discuss ideas and your involvement helps round out your resume.

2 – What do you want to experience? This point is particularly important. The unfortunate reality is that people get so caught up in high pace of work, paying the bills, morning and evening traffic – not to mention the demands of social media – that most of us don't take the time to step back and think about what experiences you were hoping to have in your career. When you first decided to become an engineer – what did you imagine yourself doing – and is that what you're doing today? If not, then maybe your career path has lead you in a different direction, but this doesn't mean that you can't still get involved in other areas of engineering. Start looking at opportunities outside of your daily grind. Explore volunteer organizations, Volunteers without Borders – if helping less fortunate regions is something that calls you. Look for international work exchange programs or speak with legislators in your own backyard to bring about changes in the industry that you want to be associated with. Civil Engineering changes how people experience life every day – it's no wonder most engineers are so passionate about their work – just don't forget to stop sometimes to make sure your experience is what you'd hope it would be or better.

3 – What do you want your legacy to be? Honestly, no one wants to think about the time after they are gone, but it is a good idea to think about what you would like to contribute to in your lifetime. Being a part of something bigger than just your own plans is something to be proud of and can help motivate you

throughout your career. It's also something that future generations can look back on for inspiration. Whether you're an inventor at heart and want to create the next engineering feat or join a fleet of engineers as they fight for a sustainable future, it's never too early to get started on your legacy.

As always, "Be Seen. Be Heard. Be relevant."

Best regards,

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