

Advice to Graduating Students Their First Year Working

Steve Snelling

Boeing Co. (*retired*)

Institute of Industrial & Systems Engineering (IISE)

IISE - Industry Advisory Board (IAB)

IISE Fellow

stephen.r.snelling@gmail.com

Topics to be Covered

- Initial Job Interview
- Current Job
- Volunteering
- Project Management Skills
- Personal Skills
- In-house Training
- Professional Society Activity
- Career Planning
- Other Activities



Initial Job Interview

- Work for a company that you admire and that inspires you
- Interview well for any job you take; ask about * :
 - Relocation cost reimbursement
 - Cost of living for the job location
 - Commute time for the location
 - Medical coverage
 - Sick leave policy
 - Vacation policies & time to accrue vacation
 - Flex-work & work from home policies
 - Travel commitment for the job



Initial Job Interview

(continued)

- Also, ask about * :
 - Any items the job offer may be contingent on (such as a new contract)
 - Company paid advanced degrees
 - Company paid training, certifications, and Society membership dues & Conferences
 - Company investment plans
 - Retirement benefits

* *Note: Much of the above information may come from their website, or Human Resources. Only a little of it may need to come from the hiring manager.*



Initial Job Interview

(continued)

- Take all the benefits into account when comparing the overall salary
- Avoid long commutes, that add to your work day
- Understand the job description well, before taking the new job
- Don't accept a “*conditional*” job position (like a possible termination after a 3-month review), unless you must



Current Job

- Read & understand your current job description
- Work towards the next level's job skills
- Get as much experience and knowledge as you can from each company & each position you hold
- Be open to learning & absorbing new experiences
- Learn the company's products & the product build-sequence (or main function of the site you work at)
- Develop a "*network*" of useful company contacts
- Dress similar to your co-workers (don't over-dress or under-dress)
- Act professionally, so you will be treated professionally



Current Job

(continued)

- Pay close attention in staff meetings, for new opportunities & take careful notes
- Learn what your boss' "*hot buttons*" are, so you can avoid them (and not tick them off)
- Prepare well for annual Performance Reviews (if these are being used)
- Don't feed the company "*rumor mill*", but pay attention to impending news that may affect you
- Bring some of your University text books to work, to use as References



Volunteering

- Volunteer for a new assignment at least once each year
- Look for an opportunity that you are uniquely qualified for (such as helping build a departmental website, or helping others set up a simulation, etc.)
- Work on one fun, volunteer activity, to broaden your company contacts (like a back-to-school backpacks activity, or community service team, etc.)
- Offer to help others, occasionally, with their projects
- Let your manager know of your outside volunteer activities (like Engineers Week, IISE Chapter, etc.)



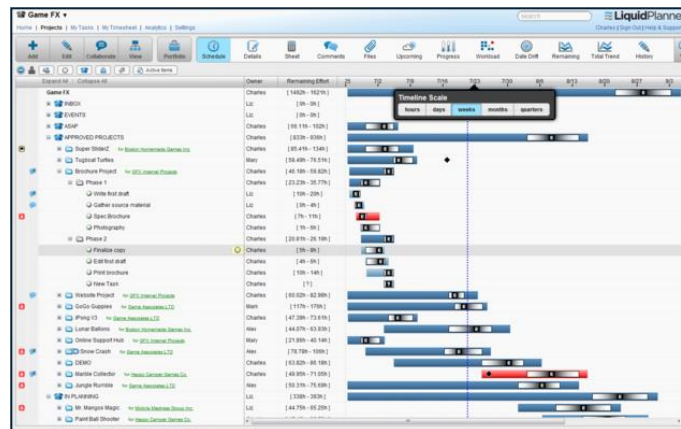
Project Management Skills

- Develop strong Project Management skills & use them often
- Take care when starting a new project and when developing the Objective, Scope, & Approach
- Develop strong Interviewing-for-Information skills, to use in conjunction with your technical skills
- Keep very organized files, both electronically & manually (in file folders)
- Keep very organized correspondence, calendar of meetings, & contacts lists
- Leave time during each day to Think and bring something useful to all your work & projects

Project Management Skills

(continued)

- Buy some basic Project Management texts, offered through the Project Management Institute (PMI), on their national website: pmi.org
- Consider taking online training through PMI
- Learn how to use your company's Project Scheduling software well enough to assist other's with their projects





Personal Skills

- Get plenty of sleep and pace yourself for a full 40-45 hour work week
- Be on time each day for work and all meetings
- Listen much more than you talk, particularly early during a new project
- Be very sparing in giving your opinion, best to be asked first
- Try to be a Team Player and get along with everyone (even if you don't really like someone)
- Develop a good attitude about your work and your job



In-house Training

- Take advantage of the internal training that your company offers (much of it online)
- Talk to co-workers about useful in-house training
- Stay current on all mandatory training & certifications for your group (or job description)
- Consider taking additional Certification training (like Lean/Six Sigma, Project Management, Safety, Ergonomics, etc.)
- Utilize useful company websites for information
- Practice your technical report writing skills and presentation skills

Professional Society Activity

- Join IISE as a professional member & volunteer (1/2 price for the 1st year, if previously a Student member)
- Attend some local Chapter meetings & events
- Or work with an IISE Society or Division
- Develop a professional “*network*” through IISE
- Try to attend professional Conferences often, and consider being a speaker
- Consider starting to prep for the P.E. exam
 - Take the Fundamentals Exam, towards an E.I.T. (Engineer-In-Training), during your Senior year
 - Many colleges offer prep for the exam





Career Planning

- Enjoy your Career as it unfolds
- Make a Career Plan & update it periodically
- Find a few Mentors & Coaches, and follow their advice, but only if it works for you
(utilize IISE's Mentoring Board)
- Practice life-time learning, to stay current in your field (you can become outdated in less than 5 yrs.)
- Buy a few job-related text books each year





Other Activities

- Give back to your University & the ISE Department; your degree is only as good as the school's current reputation
- Continue to promote the Industrial & Systems Engineering (ISE) profession, within your company and globally, through organizations like IISE
- Later in your Career, be a Mentor (start early, as a Mentor to University & high school students)



Summary Comments

- Ask about important information before accepting the initial job offer.
- Understand and grow within the job's requirements.
- Look for opportunities to volunteer for a new project at least once per year.
- Stay current on all required in-house training.
- Utilize your Project Scheduling skills to help others, occasionally.
- Utilize good work habits, and be a good Team member.
- Use IISE to broaden your Professional Network and help with your Career Planning
- Give back to your University & the ISE department.

Topics Covered

- ✓ Initial Job Interview
- ✓ Current Job
- ✓ Volunteering
- ✓ Project Management Skills
- ✓ Personal Skills
- ✓ In-house Training
- ✓ Professional Society Activity
- ✓ Career Planning
- ✓ Other Activities