

## CAREER RESOURCES

# 9 Career Tips for Engineers

As an engineer, you are probably busy figuring out how to design the most efficient engine, build the biggest bridge, solve a looming food shortage, and more. But do you ever take the time to figure out how to advance your career? You should. Engineering opportunities are booming and your skills are in demand. Here are 9 tips to help you take your career to the next level.

### **Build Your Portfolio**

You've done some really great work, but did you record any of your accomplishments, outcomes, products, designs, etc.? Each time you finish a project, take some time to write your own case study – featuring your top results. Then, take this info and update your resume, online profile, website, and networking contacts. The more people see your story and your updates, the more you will be top of mind.

### **Plan Your Career Path**

Yes, you're an engineer, but where do you want your career to go? Do you want to learn new disciplines, work for a bigger company, start your own company, take a leadership position? Only you know these answers. It's a good idea to document your plan and set some goals for achieving your path. Be sure to give yourself reasonable deadlines to stay on track.

### **Keep Learning**

Make sure you keep up with the latest engineering trends, in your field and in related engineering disciplines. While you may need to be specialized, knowing how to work with other disciplines could be a bonus – especially on larger projects. Consider additional schooling, new training courses, webinars, certifications, or just reading all the latest research. With the increasing speed of technology and the world, in general, everyone needs to be a lifelong learner.

### **Get a Mentor**

Choose someone who you respect and can learn from. Meet with your mentor regularly to discuss your career, receive advice, learn career lessons, and share engineering experiences.

### **Network**

Never stop networking. Networking has been and will continue to be the best way to advance your career and uncover new opportunities. Start by joining professional organizations, keeping in touch with classmates, former colleagues and others in your field, and going to events/conferences. Reach out to networking contacts on a regular basis to update them on what's going on in your world. Remember, networking is a two-way street; be ready to give back as well!

## **Work on Soft Skills**

It's no longer enough to just have the technical skills – that's just the start. Soft skills are more important than ever with companies looking for workers who excel in areas such as communication, problem solving, teamwork, and more. Well-rounded candidates with a combination of hard and soft skills will be the front runners for many positions.

## **Ask for Stretch Assignments**

If you want to get to the next level; prove it. Seek leadership roles in your next project. Have a conversation with your manager to figure out how you can have more responsibilities. It never hurts to ask.

## **Develop Business Skills**

Go beyond the engineering world and learn what makes companies tick. Investigate areas like finance, operations, and sales to make you more valuable and well-rounded when it comes to team projects. The more you know, the better you will be able to perform.

## **Share Your Expertise**

Continue to build your portfolio and presence outside of work. Consider creating a blog or website that boasts your engineering knowledge. Look into speaking opportunities at local engineering functions or schools. These activities will be something separate from your day job, but can help establish you as an influencer in the engineering realm. People are always looking for experts and advice.

Engineers do great things for the world. Now it's time to do something for you.