

CHAPTER 30

JOIN AN ENGINEERING SOCIETY

ENHANCE YOUR CAREER

Joining an engineering society and being an active contributing member is one of the best career moves you can make. Engineering societies offer multiple benefits to their members and provide excellent training to develop your technical, managerial, and people skills. They are more than willing to help you with your career development and offer training programs specifically for engineers.

A contact list for engineering societies is given in Appendix C. Please take a moment and review this list if you are not presently in an engineering society and find out how to join. The web sites listed provide an excellent starting point for gathering information. Most engineering societies have local chapters in all major cities that meet on a regular basis and cost little or nothing to attend. Looking back over my career, one of the best actions I took was joining an engineering society and getting involved. In fact, because of my involvement over the years, I was able to network, develop new skills, and find career advancing jobs. Don't wait. Join an engineering society today.

► **Career Tip.** Join an engineering society today; it is an excellent career move.

A quote from Paul Kostek, former IEEE USA President, "Many people ask what membership in a professional society will do for them. I always tell them the following—it's an easy place to network, members will have common interests and backgrounds; by volunteering you can develop skills, try new things and take risks that you might not want to at work. A failed weekend

program is not as career damaging as a project failure at work. Too many people see the initial cost of membership and don't consider the long-term gain they can get from being active members."

The Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) is the world's largest technical community with more than 375,000 members in 160 countries. IEEE establishes that by joining their society you gain access to the latest technical information and research, global networking, career opportunities, and exclusive discounts on financial and educational products. Students of any branch of science and technology can join IEEE. You can do anything you want in IEEE: learn, research, develop, teach, organize events, meet like-minded people, lots of possibilities. Benefits to IEEE members by joining are:

- Stay up-to-date on the latest technological innovations with IEEE publications and products. IEEE Society publications and conferences are the world's most respected sources for accurate, up-to-date information in electrical engineering, electronics, and computer science.
- As an IEEE member, you automatically receive *IEEE Spectrum* magazine. *IEEE Spectrum* is the monthly must-read magazine for technologists of today, exploring the applications and implications of new technology.
- IEEE Xplore™. As an IEEE member, to aid you in your research you can access table of contents, abstracts, and indexes, from IEEE publications. Optional access to *IEEE Potentials* magazine to members and various society memberships.
- International IEEE membership card, unique PIN and ID which lets you access unlimited information like technical journals, Proceedings of the IEEE, web issues of publications, and so forth at IEEE web site (www.ieee.org).
- Exchange information and interact with leaders in your area of expertise. As an IEEE member, you can attend any of more than 300 major IEEE technical conferences and 6,000 IEEE meetings and symposia available to members at special reduced rates.
- Chance to create your resume at the highly acclaimed IEEE jobsite and free mail account at www.ieee.org.
- Numerous scholarship opportunities for research projects and innovations. Up to \$2,500,000 are awarded to student members each year.
- Upgrade your technical and professional know-how. Geared for engineering professionals who want to stay ahead in their career, IEEE books, videos, and self-study courses are cost-efficient, time-effective solutions for maintaining your technical acuity.
- Exhibitions, paper presentation contests, technical symposia guest lectures, and much more.

Gradschools.com is one of the leading and most comprehensive online graduate school guides for information on the best graduate schools and graduate degree programs. They have the following to say about joining a society:

Thanks to ever-growing digital technologies, information abounds. But sometimes sifting through the tons of information available can be mind-boggling, not to mention time consuming. Instead, professional associations provide journals, newsletters, and web sites with invaluable information on up-to-date issues and developments in your specific field of interest.

Prospective employers seek out individuals whose field knowledge is not solely dependent on college studies; therefore, association memberships are excellent supplements for your resume. Memberships convey to an employer that you are dedicated to your field of study, while your *savoir-faire* during an interview will have you shining above other applicants. Your membership could also open doors of opportunity as you are provided with greater exposure to the job market—organizations provide “members only” job listings on their web sites, journals, newsletters, or other publications.

On the Women’s Engineering Society (WSE) web site, the following benefits to joining a society are identified:

- Gain useful management experience.
- Build practical skills by getting involved in our activities (editorial board, web management, fund raising, organizing events, and awards).
- Meet like-minded people and enjoy working to build a stronger profession, build your profile at events, and network into your next job.

The Society of Women Engineers (SWE) identifies the following long list of benefits to joining their society.

- A strong network of women engineers from academia, government, and industry, corporate representatives, government officials, and other individuals, supporting and advocating for the mission of SWE Scholarship.
- Awards and recognition programs honoring outstanding accomplishments of women in the engineering profession as well as those who have contributed significantly to the advancement of women in engineering and technology professions.
- Scholarship opportunities for all educational and professional levels, including undergraduate and graduate students, and women re-entering the workforce as engineers (at national and section levels).

- Reduced fees for admittance to national and regional education conferences that offer networking, professional development, seminars, workshops, and leadership training.
- *SWE Magazine*—the Society’s award-winning magazine, covering issues of interest to women engineers including the achievements of women engineers, career development, career guidance, activities within the Society, and technical topics.
- Webinars and podcasts.
- Online career center where you can manage your resume and search hundreds of jobs posted monthly by SWE’s sponsors.
- Develop leadership experience in a non-threatening environment through leadership roles at the sectional, regional, and national levels.
- Publish articles in the *SWE Magazine*.
- Outreach programs that encourage girls to pursue careers in engineering through SWE’s alliances with Girls Inc., Girl Scouts, and US FIRST (Foundation for the Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology.)

Have you identified any career actions you want to take as a result of reading this chapter? If so, please make sure to capture these ideas before you forget by recording them in the notes section at the back of the book.