

# Key Insights in Career Management

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# Brief Background

- BSEE (1973), MSEE (Power Engineering) (1974) - Purdue University
- MBA (Finance) (1978) – University of California-Berkeley
- 50 years full-time work experience in electric power system automation (i.e., Smart Grid)
- Worked for four automation system suppliers and 2 international consultants
- Written 150+ papers and articles, co-authored five books, one US patent
- 53 years IEEE and IEEE PES membership (IEEE Life Fellow)
- 53 years with IEEE-HKN (inducted on May 2, 1971 at Purdue University)
- Teach Smart Grid courses for GE, Georgia Tech and IEEE PES
- Mentor young professionals; reverse mentored for 3 years
- Eagle Scout; Atlanta Area Council Boy Scouts of America (AAC BSA) Board Member
- Married 44 years, two children, two grandchildren
- Work out with personal trainer for 13 years; run 5K races regularly



# Go West Young Man – My First Job\*

## Lessons Learned

- Don't let a disappointing work situation affect your attitude and work, because it will change
- No one is indispensable, continue to do more than expected and provide value to company
- Practice “accuracy without precision” in all engineering work
- Get an MBA and know how to build business case for a technical project
- Get PE license as soon as have required work experience (assuming you have passed FE exam)
- Serve as a mentor for young engineers
- Get involved in outside activities (IEEE PES) giving talks, teaching courses and developing industry standards (technology, networking, leadership benefits)



John at work at Bechtel Corporation  
in San Francisco in 1975

\*IEEE Potentials Magazine, November/December  
2011 Issue



# Do I need a Mentor?

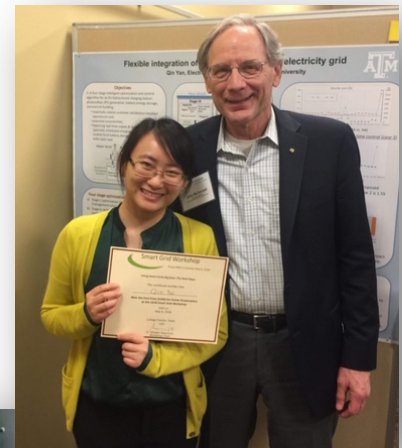
## Mentoring

- Have at least one mentor; preferably more than one for different perspectives
- Meet or talk on a regular basis (1 hour/month)

## Reverse Mentoring

- Pilot project w/ GE Digital Energy CIO
- Reverse mentored for three years
- Met on a regular basis (1 hour/month)
- Article in Computerworld magazine:

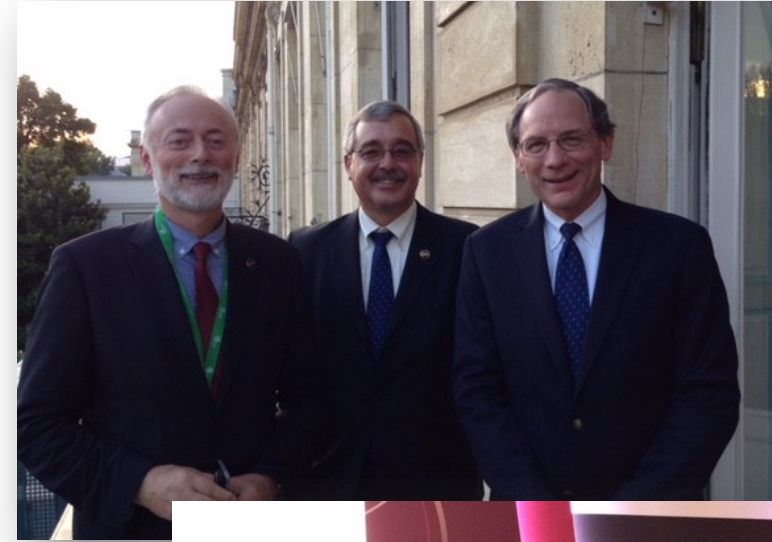
[http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9250398/IT\\_puts\\_millennials\\_to\\_work\\_as\\_mentors](http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9250398/IT_puts_millennials_to_work_as_mentors)





# Executive “Sponsor”

- GE senior executive assigned to me by HR of parent business
- Met for dinner initially, then several lunches
- Excellent opportunity to “confide” in senior executive & receive valuable feedback
- Can do on own or with your manager’s help



# Internal vs. External Focus

- Internal – what makes business “tick”?
- External – what’s happening in world around us?
- Decisions made w/o incorporating external trends & influences could be sub-optimum!
- Both are important – strive for a balance

## Suggestion

- *Internal – emphasize team effort and delegate*
- *External – be active in thought leadership, industry standards, networking, look for industry leadership positions => bring value back to your business*





# International Experience ... Is a must!

- Need to know regional differences in technology, industry standards, regulation and policy, and business cases
- Look for minimum 6 month assignments
  - Discuss with manager to find assignment
  - Utilize network to find assignment opportunities
- Learn differences in cultures (e.g., exchange of business cards in Asian countries)





# Training – Internal and External

## Internal training

- Be familiar w/ available training courses within your company
- Determine training courses you want to take for next year
- Discuss w/ manager well before year end
- Training courses part of annual review



# Training – Internal and External (con't)

## External training

- Be familiar w/ available external courses
  - IEEE courses for Electrical Engineering
  - Industry conference tutorials
  - University continuing education courses
  - Distance learning courses
- Choose at least 1 or 2 to take each year
- Discuss with manager and get approval
- Professional Engineer (PE) license  
(State Boards require minimum yearly education credits)





# Job Length

- My generation => 3 - 4 years each job/assignment
- Shortened to 1½ - 2 years now; once learn job, meet challenges and want to move on
- Recommend minimum 2 years each job to know work and people well
- Also, longer assignments force you to live with impact of your decisions





# Breadth vs. Depth

- Focus on depth with everything you do, rather than staying “on surface”
- You will have more value within your company and much more value with your company’s customers
- External focus w/ industry participation, leadership provides depth & broader perspective
- Companies trending towards experts in an area and domain rather than just “general managers”



# Transactional vs. Strategic

- Most businesses have strong transactional focus and emphasis
  - What orders can be converted quickly?
  - How will we meet financial targets for quarter?
- Need a balance between transactional and strategic
  - Some businesses have long sales cycles (e.g., software applications, integrated solutions)
  - Continue to fill pipeline w/ opportunities (strategic)
  - Business positioning and closing orders





# Networking

- Always develop and expand your network
- Provide value w/ every acquaintance and every event, cultivate long-term personal relationships
- Stay in touch with personal relationships on continual basis
- Continue to provide value
- Future job opportunities (both internal and external) will come from your network





# Social Media

## Linked In

- Most important for work/industry (IEEE Smart Grid Ask Me Anything sessions using Linked In Groups)
- Develop detailed personal profile (critical)
- Ask for written recommendations from peers, managers
- Grow number of strategic connections (16,000+ for me)

## Twitter

- Use to convey thoughts about work and industry
- Include links to your articles
- Include photos of your talks

## Facebook

- Personal use only – not for work



# Work/Life Balance

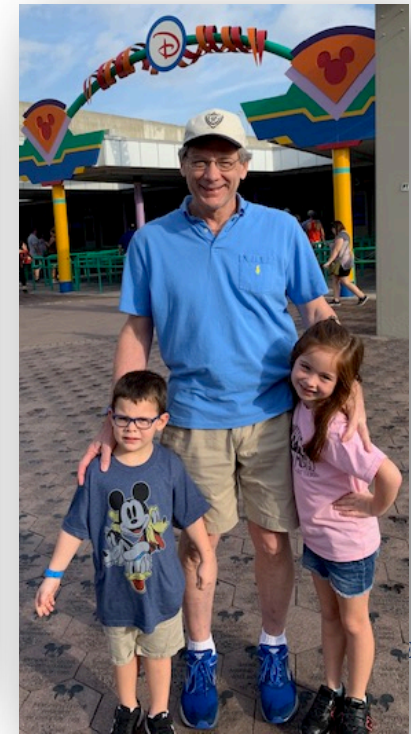
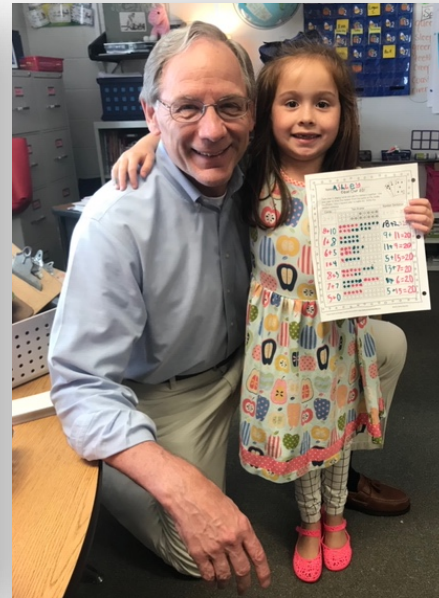
- Flexibility with work to attend kid's activities
- Leadership with neighborhood (HOA) and kid's activities (Boy Scout/Girl Scout leader, soccer coach) => don't tell your kids what you want them to do – do it yourself and set an example
- Never too busy w/ work to talk with your spouse or kids
- When with spouse and kids, spend quality time => no email, texting, computer games
- Apply PAR (Probe, Align, Raise) to work and family situations





# Work/Life Balance (con't)

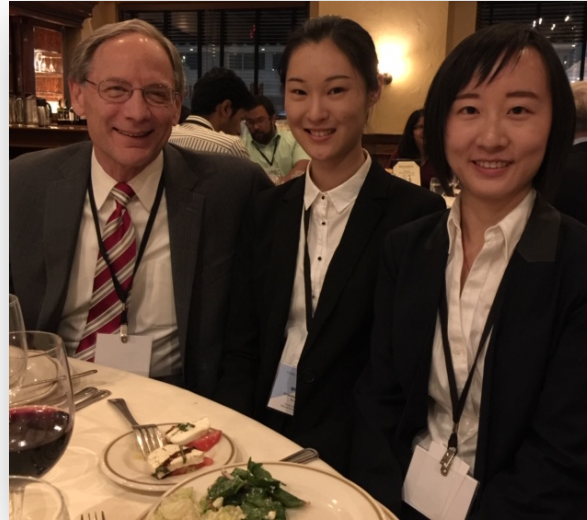
- Include spouse and kids in work and industry activities as much as possible => will have better understanding of what you do
- Chaperone kid's activities => will give you a much better understanding of your kid's friends and you will do a better job of raising of your own kids
- Active participation with FaceBook keeps you connected with your kids and their friends





# Career Planning

- Should be an important part of your annual review => most managers spend little time on career planning with staff
- Be proactive w/ manager regarding short-term and long-term career planning (i.e., getting MBA and want job that combines technical and business skills)
- Consider internal and external goals and associated training needs
- Take initiative for external => Your company will probably not encourage you to do, but follow through with your manager and bring value back to your business to reinforce your participation



# Building and Leading a Volunteer Organization

- Look for the busiest people
- Can't fire in voluntary organizations but can replace
- Do not mandate – decisions made by group from ground up
  - Examples – SCADA operators; IT/OT convergence
- Probe, Align, Raise (PAR) approach
- Tailored value proposition – critical for voluntary organizations
  - Example – Electric Power Substations Engineering book
- Challenge in building consensus (standards development)
- Praise good work and accomplishments (awards and recognition)



# Questions & Answers

