Richard Vann EngTech AIEpE AIDE

Education and qualifications: A Levels and professional qualifications (IExpE and IDE)
Which institution(s) are you a member of? Institute of Explosive Engineers (IExpE), Institute of Demolition Engineers (IDE)
Grade of membership: Associate
Job title: Managing Director
Employer: RVA Group
Length in current job: 20 years

What made you choose this career path?
The opportunities it provided me. The multi-faceted world of demolition requires knowledge and skills from various engineering disciplines. To excel in the field you therefore need an incredibly specialist and in-depth level of expertise, but if professionals get it right, their career can take them all over the world.

What do you most enjoy about your job?
The fact that the industry is constantly changing. Structures are becoming ever-more complex, so demolition and dismantling methodology must evolve accordingly, especially in light of the need to constantly heighten EHS (environmental, health and safety) excellence. However, RVA Group thrives when working on devising innovative approaches to even the most difficult projects, and I enjoy working with clients to develop and deliver solutions that they perhaps didn’t even think possible.

What is the greatest challenge you face in your job?
To continually focus on keeping people safe. We are committed to educating clients, contractors and third parties to ensure safety remains the non-negotiable priority throughout every single project, however large or small. It would be all too easy for people to become too engineering or commercially focused, especially as project pressures mount, but we can never forget the basics.

Please describe a typical working day:
The beauty of this job is that there is no such thing! The only certainty is the day will start and end at midnight. What happens in between varies on a daily basis. My role at RVA Group sees me travelling the length and breadth of the country, sometimes overseas, to discuss engineering solutions and general business advice with a range of clients. When project managing large sites we also supervise the work of demolition and dismantling contractors, having played a role in their selection too, and we liaise with varied third parties including emergency services, utilities providers and local communities.

Of course I am always on the lookout for new business opportunities too, so that we can continue to grow our business and cement our position as the leading provider of specialist engineering consultancy support.
CASE STUDY

What is your greatest professional achievement to date?
To have worked hard for 20 years to get to the position where RVA Group is working with some of the largest and most well-known organisations in the world. To have an audience comprising companies of that stature feels a very significant achievement indeed.

What attracted you to gain professional registration as an EngTech?
I believe we must continually develop our knowledge and expertise within this arena, to ensure we can provide clients with the safest and most robust and innovative engineering solutions possible. I recognised EngTech registration as a way to further advance my skills within what is a very specialist discipline, and also network with like-minded professionals.

How has gaining EngTech helped with your career?
It is a little early to say, but even at this stage I think it has added another stamp of credibility to my professional skills and knowledge, which will in turn give clients greater confidence in the RVA team.

What advice would you give someone considering professional registration as an EngTech?
If you are active in a discipline of engineering, and if you are confident in your knowledge but you want to continuously develop your expertise, then I would seriously recommend applying for professional registration with the Engineering Council. To be associated with an organisation of this stature cements your commitment to raising standards of engineering excellence within your field.

How does your employer benefit from you being professionally registered as an EngTech?
With EngTech registration, RVA Group now has the added advantage of being able to demonstrate to potential clients and other organisations such as enforcing authorities, that the team is made up of knowledgeable professionals that are appropriately trained, skilled and equipped to provide value-adding engineering expertise.

Where do you see yourself in five years’ time?
In five years’ time I would like to have achieved a higher level of professional registration with the Engineering Council, and hope the continuing growth of the company will progress in parallel with my on-going professional studies. I already provide input and contribute articles to the governing councils of the IDE and IExpE (having been past president of both Institutes) and would like to maintain this level of industry-wide consultancy. In addition, I would like more of my time to be spent passing on my knowledge and assisting other engineers with the development of their own careers.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?
When I’m not working I make sure I spend as much time with my family as possible, be that in the UK or travelling on holidays together. I also enjoy reading and playing chess to relax.

Please note, as a Professional Affiliate of the Engineering Council, IExpE does not currently have a licence to award professional registration directly and has therefore established a membership agreement with the Society of Environmental Engineers (SEE) to do so.

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