EngTech

Engineering Council

Steven Gasser EngTech FIMechE

Education and qualifications: BA (Hons) Business Studies, HNC Engineering

Which Institution are you a member of: Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE)

Grade of membership: Fellow

Current job title: Professional Development Manager

Employer: The Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC)

Length in current job: Three years
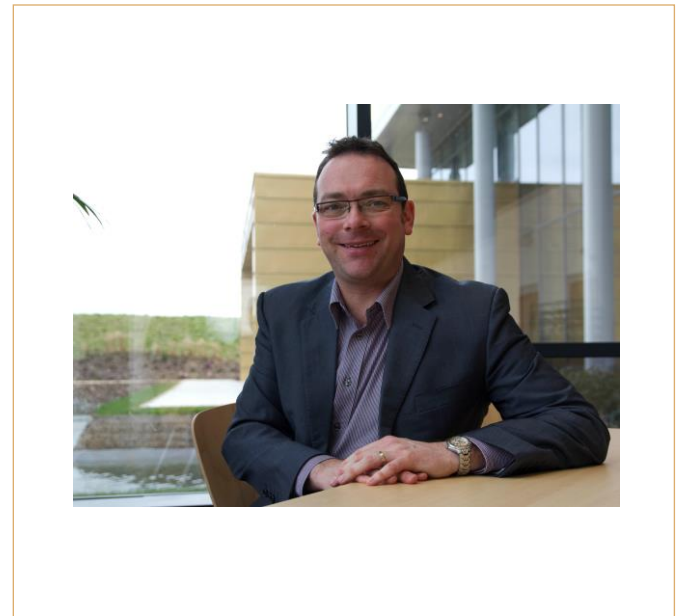

Please briefly describe your current role

I am responsible for a number of different aspects of work at the Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC). My primary duties include the recruitment, development and eventual deployment of business administration apprentices and engineering graduates and undergraduates. This includes the development, delivery and management of the MTC accredited programmes and emerging Further Learning scheme. I am also responsible for professional development, learning and development and STEM activities throughout the MTC group. My typical day includes workshop visits; daily discussions with our apprentices; meetings with developing engineers and technicians; and programme and budget management.

What is the greatest challenge you face in your job and what do you enjoy most?

The MTC is a new and rapidly expanding organisation, so the biggest challenge is trying to ensure the programmes I develop and manage always deliver an output that is in line with the organisation's expectations. This year, for example, I'll be adding three new placements to the graduate programme. I really enjoy working with a group of engineers and technicians at the start of their careers and helping them to put the building blocks in place that will take them anywhere that they want to go. Engineering provides a fantastic bedrock for a career in technology or business.

Please provide a brief outline of your career so far

I started work with a small manufacturing company in 1987 shortly after leaving school and was lucky enough to become an apprentice. I spent 12 years of my career there, rising to the position of technical sales manager.

I then worked in the metal finishing industry before joining IMechE in 2001 as a business development manager, becoming senior business development manager in 2010.

My main duties included business engagement, managing key accounts, member recruitment and retention and working with a network of volunteers across the country. I also played an integral part in developing IMechE's presence and profile in India. I left IMechE in 2012 and joined the MTC. The firm gave me the opportunity to develop a community of highly skilled, competent and motivated employees.

How was your Apprenticeship experience?

My experience was incredibly positive. I left school with no real idea of what future lay ahead of me. My father encouraged me to undertake an Apprenticeship and helped me to select the right employer. From the first day I was immersed in the fantastic world of manufacturing and engineering. I met and worked with some incredible people, all happy and willing to give their time for my development.

Would you recommend an Apprenticeship as a way to begin a career in engineering?

Without question. You see and learn so much and do it all in the protected environment of a development framework. Earning and learning at the same time is an advantage and I experienced different placements across the business so that I could develop and broaden my skills and knowledge. It was also a way of building a network of contacts early on that have since influenced my career.

From your work with apprentices, what is your impression of how beneficial Apprenticeships are?

They are fantastic and allow an apprentice to explore their full potential, to start building a career and gain skills that will last a lifetime. Anyone with a desire to learn and improve themselves would benefit from becoming an apprentice and if you make the most of your Apprenticeship, industry will make the best of you. I stumbled into engineering by chance but, once there, I absolutely loved it and I would recommend it as a career to anyone.

What spurred you to work towards gaining professional registration as an EngTech?

I was surrounded by professional engineers and technicians throughout the working week and for me it was about achieving peer parity. I wanted to be recognised for what I had done and what I had achieved. Professional registration is a fantastic way of doing this.

How did you become registered as an EngTech?

I followed the standard application process, the most difficult bit was trying to remember all the things I had achieved over the years!

How has achieving EngTech benefitted your career?

The developing engineers and technicians, mentors and coaches that I'm working with know that I've been through a process that I'm asking them to undertake. I can show them that the journey to professional registration is worthwhile and highly beneficial.

What advice would you give someone considering professional registration as an EngTech?

Just do it! Set some time aside to explore the UK Standard of Professional Engineering Competence (UK-SPEC) and the process. You will find it an interesting and thought provoking challenge.

What is your employer's attitude? Were they supportive while you were working towards professional registration as an EngTech?

Absolutely, IMechE and the MTC see professional registration as an important indicator of professional competence.

How does your employer benefit from you being professionally registered?

Registration is the recognition of my competence and capability, a guarantee that I am committed to undertaking a process of continual development that will help the company to grow and prosper.

What are your future goals?

To develop my career and gain a broader and deeper understanding of the learning and development tools and techniques that will help to drive the MTC to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding workforce, which is working in an innovative and dynamic, high value manufacturing environment.

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